

Notches on The Stick

Mr. Gladstone, who has been a "bright and shining light" in so many spheres of literature and statecraft, was not averse to trying his hand at poetry, albeit with only moderate success. He has, however, spoken a recent word, with which the editors will sympathize,—a timely word respecting redundancy of rhyme, in this period when the Pierian spring seems to be made as common as the trough at which we water the cattle. The veteran of many wordy wars writes as follows in the "The New Reviews": "The temptation to versify is so great that, as I suppose, most or all of us have indulged in it. This is no offence at all. Only by trying our feathers shall we learn whether we are fit to fly. * * If, when it is found out, the moth still flies into the candle, it is no great offense. The lucubrations may still charm the family circle; possibly, as Cupid is blind, may even smooth the path of courtship. . . The point at which the case grows serious is when we come to think of printing." Surely the sage is right. The eagerness it is great to rush into print, to challenge approval and admiration, to the vain consumption of time and patience. The rudimentary performance in the line of verse thrust upon the public surpass belief, when a half hour spent in comparing them with the work of almost any poet who ever succeeded, would test their real value or worthlessness. Such things may be good enough for "home consumption," but their authors should not be at the trouble of sending them abroad.

We are tempted to above observations by turning the pages of several books sent to us,—books in which there is little or nothing to justify their existence. The preface of the first at hand ["Leoline and other poems," by C. W. Lounsbury,] is a masterful piece of self conceit, but is far better in its way than the alleged "poems." The author begins by saying: "That 'good wine needs no bush, while a spurious article is made worse from apology,' is a just though trite expression." Whether he thinks his wine good or not may be gathered from either remarks, such as,— "May not Michigan have her literature and literary as well as Massachusetts? To this we will not give a negative answer. Mr. Lounsbury's book is issued from Detroit, and is dedicated,— "To the lovers of poetry and her patrons throughout his adopted state." As for Mr. Abel Beach [Western Airs, Chas. Wells Moulton, Buffalo N. Y.] he and his muse have a healthy cheerfulness, and are very innocent of anything like poetry. Could we find a stanza that does not creak we should do him the justice of quotation. Better than either, and differing from the first-mentioned in that it evinces sincerity and some real poetic feeling, though for the most part crudely expressed, is "Hours of Pleasure," by Aaron L. Sleyster. The author is a photographer located in Preston, Minnesota, and his book of 316 pages is copiously illustrated. With camera and pencil he has set himself to celebrate his native scenes, as well as with the pen. Mr. Sleyster would have done better had he excluded about two thirds of the matter he has chosen to print, and striven to make the admissible pieces more perfect in their form. To him we would not be grievous or unkind in our comments, for we find that in him which forbids us to be so and his preface does not suppose him to be the peer of Lowell or Emerson, after Mr. Lounsbury's style. On the other hand he is modest, but almost jubilant in his artless enthusiasm: "The greatest pleasure I can imagine is to indulge in the sweet recreation of writing poetry. I have, however, long abandoned all attempts to describe the sublime joy I experience during those hours of idleness. But of this I feel certain, that, whenever I have a few spare moments, I shall tune my artless notes under the guidance of my gentle muse, to express in smoothly-flowing numbers the purer thoughts of my inmost soul, and record them for future reference. It is in this guileless manner that this collection has found its way into existence." Mr. Sleyster's home-feeling has induced him to dedicate his work to his sisters.— "To Mary, the generous; Anna, the whole-souled; Coda, the practical; and Edith, the affectionate." His wife is also a poetical spirit, and she appreciates and loyally encourages her husband's muse. Here are a few stanzas by our brother of Minnesota:

When the autumn days grow hazy
And the crickets cease to sing,
When the flies are nearly crazy,
So they bite most anything;
Then I hie me to the country,
'Mid the fields of gold and green
For I love the dreamy music
Of the humming thrash-machine.

You cannot go with Leslie,
Said Mrs. Grenadier,
He cannot come into my house,
I do not want him here.
Your father, too, despises him;
Full often he has said,—
'In preference to Leslie's wife
I'd see my daughter dead."

How sweetly day and night each other greet
At twilight's hour; how fresh the ling'ring breeze
With perfumes laden; strangely smooth and sweet
Our bark is wafted with the tide, Louise.

There's a village in the valley
Where Root river ripples by,
Whose attractiveness and beauty
With the charms of nature vie;
Whose rare picturesque appearance,
'Mid the sunlit summer scene
Is akin to royal splendor
At the crowning of a queen.

Blow! blow! blow! blow!
The bleak hills are waiting and moaning for snow;
The hills are bare,
No green grass is there,
The forest is growing in woodland and glen,
That cheered us last summer, has vanished again.
The birds have departed, excepting the jay,
Who screeches about in a desolate way.
All day I have heard
This foolhardy bird;
The woodland resounds with his notes so absurd;
Now up in the branches, now down to the ground.
It pains me to see this lone bird flatter round.

There is a foolish adage, and we've often heard it
By those around us, day by day, 'I wish that I
were dead.'
They really do not wish to die, for when attacked
by illness,
That soon would put an end to them they scurry
'round for pills.
Or when they're subject to a cold and feel rheu-
matic pains,
They somehow always know enough to come in
when it rains.

There's no use grumbling at our lot, or try to pick
a flaw;
This world's not perfect, but it is the best we ever
saw.

Who is to forbid Mr. Sleyster, after his days of toil wandering along the Root river, where he seems to have a quick eye for rural beauty; or who is to forbid him to cheer the evenings of a Minnesota winter by putting his fancies into verse for his own pleasure, and that of his friends, if we may not suppose a wider public?

"A Cluster of Poets," by John D. Ross, L. L. D., (Walter Reid, Publisher, New York, 1897) is a series of papers contributed to the "Home Journal" and other New York periodicals, and now collected into a volume of 376 pages. Biographical and critical notices are given with selections of each author's verse, of which a considerable variety is given, varying in merit as poor rhyming varies from true song. The book opens with an article on Wallace Bruce which has heretofore appeared in Dr. Ross' "Random Sketches on Scottish 'Subjects,'" and it is characterized by the disposition to overpraise which runs through the whole. Nevertheless the praise is undoubtedly given in sincerity. Rev. Archibald Ross, Patrick Macpherson, William Anderson, Hon. C. H. Collins, John Imrie, Wm. T. James, James D. Law, Prof. Benjamin F. Leggett, Ralph H. Shaw, Hunter MacCulloch, John MacFarlane, George Martin, Peter Ross, L. L. D., Rev. William Wye Smithe, Robert Reid, Charles Reekie, Albert E. S. Smythe, George Williamson, and other writers, Scottish and American are represented. The work is "Dedicated to Chauncy M. Depew, L. L. D., A Lover of Literature, Science and Art. A warm-hearted gentleman, and one of the foremost representatives of Americans of our time." PASTOR FELIX.

Sir Oliver Mowat Afflicted With Kidney Trouble.

The news has been flashed across the wires from the old country that Sir Oliver Mowat, who is there seeking medical advice, is a victim of kidney disease. His friends say that the case is not as alarming as the press reports have stated. But there seems to be no disguising the fact, that with Ontario's Premier, as thousands of others, kidney disease has seized the system. It is laying waste the lives of our best people in all parts of the Dominion. And yet those who have learned to use South American Kidney Cure are finding in it a remedy far surpassing a sea voyage, or even the skill of England's greatest physician. It is a kidney specific, not a cure-all, but as a specialist in this particular it gives relief within six hours after the first dose, and renewed health to all who use it.

The Porcupine's Quills.

"The current opinion that a porcupine throws its quills at an enemy is not supported by facts. Says the Portland Oregonian:

The spines of the porcupine are very loosely attached to the body and are very sharp—as sharp as a needle. At almost the slightest touch they penetrate the nose of a dog or the clothing or flesh of a person touching the porcupine, and stick there, coming away from the animal without any pull being required.

The facility in catching hold with one end and letting go with the other has sometimes caused people to think that the spines had been thrown at them. The outer end of the spines, for some distance down, is covered with small barbs. These barbs cause a spine once imbedded in a living animal to keep work farther in with every movement of the muscles.

THE ROCKING CHAIR SPINE.

Indolence and Love of Ease are the Cause of this Affliction.

'Weaver's thumb' and 'house maid's knee' are quite familiar terms, especially to those who are fond of pursuing journals, medical and hygienic, but the 'rocking chair spine' is less talked of, possibly because it is one of the possessions of those dwelling in more affluent circles, and is what may be classed among the luxuries in the way of disease, says the New York Ledger.

But it is none the less a clearly defined ill, and one that often leads to consequences more serious than its primary condition might suggest.

Indolence and love of ease are the exciting causes of this affliction, and genuine spinal disease has in many instances been its unfortunate climax.

Strict hygienists and health culturists tell us that the rocking-chair is an unmixed evil. It perpetually changes the equilibrium of the body and agitates the circulation. It injures the eyes, as it continually changes the focus of whatever one may be looking at. It so disturbs the brain that physicians have forbidden mothers and nurses to rock delicate babies.

It will thus be seen that the rocking-chair begins its deadly mission very early in the lives of its victims, and it is equally true that they are very likely to keep up the mischief until they are ready to make their final exodus and slip from the rocking chair into the grave.

The symptoms that first attract attention are a soreness and sensitiveness of the spine, usually that portion near or below the waist, and sometimes extending to the lower edges of shoulder-blades. There may be more or less indigestion accompanying it, and headaches are not infrequent.

The trouble arises from an improper position in sitting. Instead of keeping the spinal column in a perpendicular position the lower part is bent forward, as one lounges in a chair with a sofa cushion. The strain on one side of the spine caused by its curved shape after a time produces irritation, and if long-continued, inflammation of a serious character ensues. While there may not be fatal consequences, there surely are much inconvenience and discomfort attending a weak or irritable state of the spinal column. Good health cannot exist with such a condition of affairs neither can good spirits dwell in such a body. Persons who experience a sense of weakness or weariness, or a dull ache in the back, will do well to take thought if they have been too devoted to the rocking-chair and its luxurious cushions.

It is by physicians declared to be much better to rest either sitting upright or in a recumbent position, rather than the lounging, half-doubled-up attitude that rocking-chair devotees ordinarily assume. But the wide, welcoming arms of an easy-chair are so alluring that it takes Spartan courage to give up such a delicious luxury.

A LORD INCOGNITO.

He was Unassuming in Appearance but Still a Great Man.

A story was recently told about a brewer who, on a train in England, met an unpretentious man who seemed to know all about the brewing business, and finally offered the man a modest situation in his establishment. Whereupon the unknown person remarked that 'his name was Bass' (that of the most famous of British brewers), afterward Lord Barton. This is really a warmed-over story about the Earl of Rosse.

Lord Rosse, who built the famous telescope that bears his name, was an expert mechanic, and was also somewhat careless about his dress. One day he went over a great manufactory. The manager, seeing that he seemed to know a good deal about things, fell into conversation with him, and presently said to him:

'Look here, my man I'm looking for some such intelligent workmen as you seem to be. Do you want a job?'

Lord Rosse thanked him, but said he was obliged to decline the kind offer. On another occasion the earl was looking through the engine room of a large manufactory. He suddenly became much interested in something he saw, and looked apprehensive. The engineer came up.

'Well, what's up?' he growled. 'What are you shaking your head and looking at your watch for? What have you got to find fault with?'

'Oh,' answered Lord Rosse, 'I'm not finding any fault. I am just waiting till the boiler explodes.'

'Till the boiler explodes? Why, you're crazy, man! You'll have to get out of here.'

'Well,' said the earl, 'if you work ten minutes longer with that screw loose there, the boiler certainly will explode.'

The engineer looked at the screw indicated by his rough visitor. He jumped at the screw, and fastened it as soon as he could.

'Why didn't you say that sooner?' he demanded.

'Why should I?' answered Lord Rosse. 'I never yet have had an opportunity to see a boiler explode.'

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IT IS THE FACT, Think as You Please

It is not generally known, but it is a fact readily proven by the investigations of science, that the real danger from every known ailment of mankind is caused by inflammation; cure the inflammation and you have conquered the disease in each case. Inflammation is manifested outwardly by redness, swelling and heat; inwardly by congestion of the blood vessels and growth of unsound tissue, causing pain and disease.

External inflammation accompanies bruises, bites, cuts, stings, burns, scalds, chaps, cracks, strains, sprains, fractures, etc., and is the chief danger therefrom. Internal inflammation frequently causes outward swellings; as instances familiar to all we mention pimples, toothache, stiff joints and rheumatism. Yet the great majority of internal inflammations make no outside show, for which reason they are often more dangerous than the external forms.

Causes Every Known Disease!

Inflammation of the nervous system embraces the brain, spine, bones and muscles. The breathing organs have many forms of inflammation; such as colds, coughs, pleurisy, bronchitis, etc. The organs of digestion have a multitude of inflammatory troubles. The vital organs form one complete plan mutually dependent; therefore inflammation anywhere is felt more or less everywhere, and impairs the health. The late Dr. A. Johnson, an old fashioned Family Physician, originated JOHNSON'S ANODYNE LINIMENT, in 1870, to relieve pain and cure every form of inflammation. It is today the Universal Household Remedy.

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